

# Defeating Temptation

## The Gospel According to Luke, Message #4, Luke 4:1-13

### ILLUSTRATION

Jim Grant wrote in Reader's Digest of an overweight businessman who decided it was time to shed some excess pounds. He took his new diet seriously, even changing his driving route to avoid his favorite bakery. One morning, however, he showed up at work with a gigantic coffee cake. Everyone in the office scolded him, but his smile remained nonetheless. "This is a special coffee cake," he explained. "I accidentally drove by the bakery this morning, and there was a host of goodies in the window. I felt it was no accident, so I prayed, 'Lord if you want me to have one of those delicious coffee cakes, let there be a parking spot open right in front.' And sure enough, there it was, the eighth time around the block!" (Jim Grant, <https://thedisciplers.com/illustrations-about-temptation/>).

### INTRODUCTION

The first five words of James 1:14 are an introduction to an explanation and a statement of truth. James 1:14 says, "but every man is tempted," The businessman recounted in the story put himself in the place of temptation.

### ILLUSTRATION

One of my FB friends, who pastors in Las Vegas, Nevada, recently shared a moving story. About fifteen years ago, a man came to his church and trusted Christ. The man was an alcoholic. The pastor began discipling him, and the man who trusted Christ and was being disciplined started bringing others to church. However, there was one thing he would not agree with the pastor on. He continued going to bars where, he believed, his knowledge of barroom culture enabled him a great chance to be a witness. The contention became such that the man separated from the pastor. After a time, the pastor received a letter. The man was in prison serving a lengthy sentence for murder when another man was killed in a barroom fight.

### INTRODUCTION

These accounts illustrate the danger of temptation and the importance of fleeing it when you can. The Bible teaches us to do this, and we have often been encouraged to do so.

What if fleeing is not an option? What if the temptation you are facing is not something you can remove from yourself or remove yourself from?

After he shared Jesus's baptism and birth (genealogy) stories, Luke shared about Jesus's experience with temptation. We should see His experience as something we can learn from.

What does Jesus's experience teach me about temptation? That is the question we will answer from Luke 4:1-13.

## **BIBLE**

'And Jesus being full of the Holy Ghost returned from Jordan, and was led by the Spirit into the wilderness, being forty days tempted of the devil. And in those days he did eat nothing: and when they were ended, he afterward hungered. And the devil said unto him, If thou be the Son of God, command this stone that it be made bread. And Jesus answered him, saying, It is written, That man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word of God. And the devil, taking him up into an high mountain, shewed unto him all the kingdoms of the world in a moment of time. And the devil said unto him, All this power will I give thee, and the glory of them: for that is delivered unto me; and to whomsoever I will I give it. If thou therefore wilt worship me, all shall be thine. And Jesus answered and said unto him, Get thee behind me, Satan: for it is written, Thou shalt worship the Lord thy God, and him only shalt thou serve. And he brought him to Jerusalem, and set him on a pinnacle of the temple, and said unto him, If thou be the Son of God, cast thyself down from hence: for it is written, He shall give his angels charge over thee, to keep thee: And in their hands they shall bear thee up, lest at any time thou dash thy foot against a stone. And Jesus answering said unto him, It is said, Thou shalt not tempt the Lord thy God. And when the devil had ended all the temptation, he departed from him for a season.'

Luke 4:1-13

<https://my.bible.com/bible/1/LUK.4.1-13>

### **1. THE CONTEXT OF TEMPTATION (VV. 1-2)**

#### **EXPLANATION**

The contrasts between verses 1 and 2 are notable. Jesus was filled with the Spirit (v. 1a), but He was empty of food (v. 2b). Then, He was led by the Spirit (v. 1b), but He was tempted by the devil (v. 2a). The contrasts and the order they are arranged is purposeful. We are meant to notice and learn something from them.

## APPLICATION

Being filled with the Spirit does not mean you will never lack anything else. You may go hungry; you may be tired; you may lack friendship and relationship, etc.

Being led by the Spirit does not mean you will not encounter the devil. You may be filled with the Spirit and walking in the Spirit. You may be obedient and yield to Him and still meet the one who is the enemy of your soul.

Understand that you can be filled with the Spirit and be led by the Spirit and still experience some lack and encounter with the enemy. God may lead you to a place where both realities exist.

## EXPLANATION

We may not consider this account applicable to us because Jesus is God's Son. Jesus could not be tempted, could He?

"Tempted" comes from the same word translated as "tempted" in James 1:13-14.

## BIBLE

'Let no man say when he is tempted, I am tempted of God: for God cannot be tempted with evil, neither tempteth he any man: but every man is tempted, when he is drawn away of his own lust, and enticed.'

James 1:13-14

<https://my.bible.com/bible/1/JAS.1.13-14>

## EXPLANATION

Luke saw Jesus's temptation as legitimate. How do we reconcile this with James's statement about God? Jesus could not be tempted as the Son of God, but He could be tempted as the Son of man.

David Guzik penned, "We sometimes think that Jesus' temptations were not real because they were not exactly like ours. There was never a sinful pull or a sinful memory inside of Jesus, like in us. But in many ways, Jesus' temptations were more real and more severe. For us, the pressure of temptation often only relents when we give in - and Jesus never did. He had to withstand a much greater pressure of temptation than you or I ever will" (Guzik, *Enduring Word Commentary*).

## APPLICATION

We should study Jesus's temptation as a source of help for responding to temptation.

## **2. THE CONTENT OF TEMPTATION (VV. 3-12)**

### **EXPLANATION**

Satan's temptation of Jesus mimics the aspects of temptation that we face.

#### **A. AGAINST THE WILL, WORSHIP, AND WORD OF GOD**

### **EXPLANATION**

In tempting Him to eat bread, Satan tempted Jesus to do something that was not wrong in itself but was wrong because it was not what the Father wanted. "If thou be the Son of God" was not a challenge to prove that He was the Son of God. The Greek language has multiple classes of condition. This class means that Satan knew He was the Son of God. The temptation was not to prove His Sonship but to exploit His Sonship. Satan moved Him to take advantage of His position and status. He tempted Him to act outside of God's will.

Then, Satan directly tempted Jesus to worship him. He offered Him the kingdoms of the world. Jesus did not challenge Satan's claim. The Father has promised the Son these kingdoms, but only through the way of the cross to the crown. Satan offered Jesus the crown without the cross.

Finally, Satan tempted Jesus to throw Himself from the temple to demonstrate His authority by putting God in a position to fulfill Psalm 91:11-12. Yes, Satan knows and uses God's word to his advantage. However, he used it deceptively and incorrectly.

#### **B. CONTRAST TO THE LOVE, HOPE, AND FAITHFULNESS OF GOD**

### **EXPLANATION**

Satan questioned the Father's love when tempting Jesus to turn stones into bread.

He questioned the Father's hope when tempting Jesus to avoid the cross (see Heb. 12:1-3).

He questioned the Father's faith(fulness) when tempting Jesus to throw Himself off the temple. So, the enemy attacked the three essential virtues of the Christian life.

## **C. THROUGH THE LUST OF THE FLESH, THE LUST OF THE EYES, AND THE PRIDE OF LIFE**

### **EXPLANATION**

Satan tempted Jesus through the same avenues he tempted Eve in the Garden and the same avenues he lures us through.

## **3. THE COMBATTING OF TEMPTATION (VV. 3-12)**

### **EXPLANATION**

Jesus did not defeat temptation through supernatural, divine means unavailable to us. Jesus defeated Satan as a Spirit-filled, Word-of-God-filled man. The resources He used are available to us.

### **A. THE SPIRIT OF GOD**

#### **EXPLANATION**

God's Spirit, which indwells every believer, supplies power to enable me to overcome Satan's power.

### **B. THE WORD OF GOD**

#### **EXPLANATION**

When known and internalized, God's word supplies truth to enable me to identify Satan's lies.

"Psychologists and others who study how our minds work talk about the law of exposure. The law of exposure says that the mind absorbs and reflects what it is exposed to the most. Basically, if we allow a thought into our minds, it will come out in our lives" (Craig Groeschel, *Winning the War in Your Mind*).

So, we will keep our minds with God's word.

### **C. THE COMMUNITY OF GOD (GOD'S PEOPLE)**

#### **EXPLANATION**

God's community, when participated in, supplies encouragement to endure Satan's attack.

Matthew and Luke likely recorded this event because Jesus shared His experience with His followers.

“This is the most sacred of stories, for it can have come from no other source than his own lips. At some time, he must have told his disciples about this most intimate experience of his soul” (Barclay; as quoted by Guzik, *Enduring Word Commentary*).

"Eve got into trouble when she walked in the garden alone. I have my worst temptations when I am by myself" (Luther, as cited in Constable, *Constable's Notes on the Bible*).

## **4. THE CONCLUSION OF TEMPTATION (V. 13)**

### **A. SATAN LEFT FOR A TIME**

#### **EXPLANATION**

Stay prepared. A season of temptation is just that, a season.

### **B. ANGELS MINISTERED TO JESUS**

#### **EXPLANATION**

This experience took something out of Jesus, but God replenished Him.

#### **BIBLE**

'Be sober, be vigilant; because your adversary the devil, as a roaring lion, walketh about, seeking whom he may devour: whom resist stedfast in the faith, knowing that the same afflictions are accomplished in your brethren that are in the world. But the God of all grace, who hath called us unto his eternal glory by Christ Jesus, after that ye have suffered a while, make you perfect, stablish, strengthen, settle you . To him be glory and dominion for ever and ever. Amen.'

1 Peter 5:8-11

<https://my.bible.com/bible/1/1PE.5.8-11>

### **C. HE CONTINUED IN THE SPIRIT OF GOD**

#### **EXPLANATION**

He went on in God's power.

## **CONCLUSION**

You will face temptation, but you can overcome and escape it.